

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CODEL TO IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 14 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor of the House tonight having just returned from the country of Iraq yesterday afternoon. And even given the lateness of the hour, I wanted to come address the House because there are some issues that are, in fact, very timely and time-sensitive, and I thought it was important to get them spoken on the floor of the House.

My intention is to come back with the other Members who were on the trip with me, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. JORDAN of Ohio, Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee, and talk about this in some depth in the weeks to come. Mr. KING of Iowa was also with us on the trip. But because of the late-

ness tonight and the lateness that we are likely to go tomorrow night and Thursday night, it may be next week before we can actually do that formal presentation, and there were some things that I wanted to get on the floor of the House this week.

Madam Speaker, I would report to the House that as of the third week of July 2007, it is still a very mixed report about the situation in Iraq. My overall impression from this latest trip is that significant successes have occurred and are likely to continue to occur as far as returning control of the country to the Iraqi Government and delivering it out of the hands of criminals and murderers. At the same time, it is still a very dangerous situation, and the sacrifice is very real.

Madam Speaker, the future of America is vastly different depending upon the outcome of what happens in the country of Iraq. A stable country, a country with a representational government, a country able to act as a partner for peace in the Middle East would be vastly preferable to a lawless land ruled by terrorists and criminals providing a base for training operations and, Madam Speaker, a source for funding for further enlargement of their activities.

Almost without question, the divergent future was on the minds of almost everyone I talked with during the 2-day trip. Certainly America's best interest is going to be served by stability in that country and with their active participation in stabilizing a very troubled region.

It has been just over a year since I last traveled to Iraq. A lot has changed both at home and in Iraq over that time. There is no question that the news reports coming out of Iraq have almost been universally pessimistic for about 10 months' time. I was obviously very concerned about what I would encounter upon my return to that country, but the trip made over the weekend, a Saturday and Sunday, a very condensed time frame with a great deal to see, we learned a great deal.

Starting with a 2 a.m. departure from the military airport in Kuwait City, we loaded on the C-130 for the flight into Baghdad. The plane was cramped and fully loaded. Already at 2:00 in the morning, it was over 90 degrees. The plane contained a large number of soldiers and marines who were returning to Baghdad. Because of the very early hour and the loudness of the aircraft, there was not much time for conversation; but after the plane landed and the engines were stopped, there was a brief episode where conversation was possible.

For most, this was their second or third rotation. Their deployments had been extended through 15 months, and most would not go home for almost a year from that point. When several who were standing next to me learned who I was, there was obviously an eagerness for conversation.

Since February, there has been a change in how they have done their

work. Now most were placed alongside Iraqi soldiers in smaller groups around town. They were no longer attached to the larger, more protected bases, and the soldiers were clearly seeing a greater amount of activity, and it concerned them.

I spoke in some depth with the soldier in front of me. He had 10 months left in his rotation, and sometimes he wondered if the generals knew what they were up against in this deployment. He complained about the long hours and the heat. He complained about being separated from his family. He had been reading a book on the plane, and I asked him about this. He said it was a book about philosophy, so I naturally assumed that upon leaving the Army at the end of his deployment, he would likely return to school, or perhaps he had a job waiting for him, and I asked him about this. He looked at me strangely. "Well, I just reenlisted for 5 years," he said tersely.

We left the plane and parted ways. He got on an armored convoy, and we were loaded in Blackhawk helicopters for the next leg of our trip down to Ramadi. It was still very early in the morning, and the sun was barely breaking through the low dust layer that always seems to hang over Baghdad in the summer. The temperature was already in excess of 100 degrees, but in many ways my conversation with this soldier underscored the ambiguities, the inconsistencies, and the incongruous nature of life in Iraq.

Over the next 48 hours, we would see stories of great heroism and great hope. At the same time, the frustration of buying time and space for a young government, sometimes a dysfunctional government, of a war-torn country was underscored at several junctures.

From a military perspective, success has been made and continues to be made on a near daily basis. Indeed, the primary enemy, al Qaeda, has not only been beaten, but vanquished every time there has been an encounter. And because of the increased military activity, the encounters have been more frequent. At the same time, a very young government seems to have already developed entrenched bureaucracies because of the centralized nature of the government in Iraq. As military successes are happening around the country, aid from the central government is slow to be dispatched out to the outlying communities.

As is probably the case with every other conflict in our Nation's history, there are widely distributed data points, and one can take one or two of these and make virtually any argument that one wishes to make. It takes a more disciplined outlook to analyze the data, look at the trendlines, but that is a discipline that must be exercised.

Madam Speaker, the city of Ramadi in the al-Anbar Province in Western Iraq was the first stop for us on Saturday. This is a city the size of Fort